DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 539 EC 180 947

AUTHOR Wojciehowski, Thomas W.; Burton, Louise F.
TITLE The Special Education Teacher as Consultant. Who? Me!
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Consultants; *Disabilities; Inservice Teacher Education; Models; Preservice Teacher Education; *Special Education Teachers; Teacher Role; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

The teacher consultant model is seen as one way to develop collaborative working relationships between classroom teachers and special educators. A triadic model of consultation as modified for special education settings is presented as an educational team linked in shared responsibility to resolve a common goal. Considerations in the consultative process are examined, including the role of active listeners and information gatherers. Strategies with which consultants can gain acceptance are noted, including modeling the use of interview skills, demonstrating the willingness to learn from others, and using situational leadership. The importance of recognizing the necessity of motivation and task dedication for insuring productive team participation is emphasized. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Thomas W Wojciechowski
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED262539

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER AS CONSULTANT

WHO? ME?!

The teacher consultant model is the newest and most innovative service delivery model in special education and will soon become the dominant role of special educators (Lilly, 1979). Yet, few special educators have been trained for this role (Brown, 1977). Further, only a small percentage of the special educators' time is spent in consultation activities (Evans, 1980). Current philosophy and legislation mandates, however, necessitates the same learning environment for the handicapped learners and their non-handicapped peers. As a result an increasing number of students with special learning and behavioral problems are receiving the majority of their educational services in regular classrooms. Thus, a two-fold dilemma is developing in the training arena:

1. Regular mainstream educators who were trained to believe that exceptional students were the sole responsibility of the special educator are frequently faced with the feeling of unpreparedness in educating their new students.

2. The special educator who previously assumed the major direct teaching responsibility for these special-needs students is being challenged to assume a role of onsite consultant to all teachers.

Thomas W. Wojciehowski, Education Specialist
SERN 2
Riverside, CA 92504

Louise P. Burton, Associate Professor
California State University-San Bernardino
San Bernardino, CA 92407

EC 180947

The reality of this dilemma demands a retraining of the on-line teachers through comprehensive in-servicing, while at the same time necessitates a revision of pre-service training at the university level.

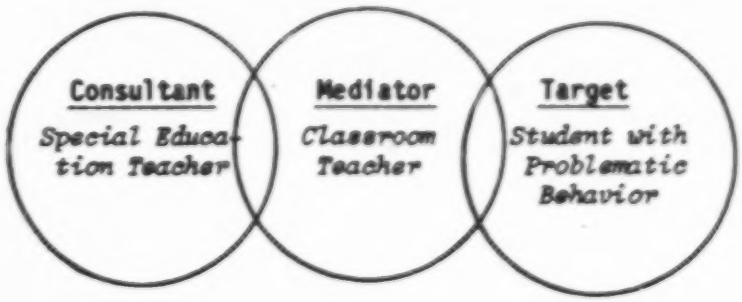
Development of the current need for collaborative working relationships between classroom teachers and special educators has been a slow and continual process. Historical and philosophical trends as well as litigation and legislation have significantly influenced the changing status of special education. In addition, research evidence validating the superiority of a mainstream experience for handicapped learners has supported a shared responsibility approach to educating handicapped learners.

University personnel preparation programs are also identifying the need for change, and institutions of higher education are beginning to adapt the pre-service curricula to these changing needs. A recent study of special education personnel preparation programs (Geiger, 1983) revealed that ten institutions identify consultation as an area of preparation. While this is a small number, it does evidence that teacher preparation programs are recognizing and addressing the need to prepare special educators for new roles. However, the need to retrain on-line teachers through comprehensive inservicing, as well as to revise pre-service training to incorporate consultation components, is still great. Both present and future special and generalist teachers must learn to work cooperatively to share expertise if the full intent of mainstream education is to be achieved.

Consultative training should be thorough and should include significant content as well as opportunities to practice consultative

skills in supervised learning situations. A triadic model of consultation has been proposed by Idol-Maestas, Nevin and Paolucci-Whitcomb (1984) and is currently being used by Project RETOOL of the Council for Exceptional Children as a means to train post doctoral leadership. Trainees become trainers of graduate and undergraduate teachers who then in turn develop programs to improve the learning climate of handicapped students. Project RETOOL and the colleges and universities now implementing consultation training serve as support models to those who seek to develop or model preservice and inservice training programs to incorporate consultation components.

A triadic model of consultation delivery of human services was proposed by Tharpe and Wetzel (1969) and has since been replicated and modified for special education settings (Dollar and Klinger, 1975; Heron and Harris, 1982; Idol-Maestas, Nevin, and Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1984; Reynolds, 1977). In this triadic model services to the special education student, the target, are offered through a mediator, usually the regular classroom teacher. Empahsis in the triadic model is placed on collaboration between the consultant and the mediator in identifying and resolving the problem which is being experienced by the referred student. The consultant in the triadic model is the person with the expertise needed to support and mobilize the mediator's influence on the target. Thus, the educational team is linked in a shared responsibility to resolve a common goal:



Four principles of collaboration which serve as the basis for successful implementation of the triadic model of collaboration have been proposed by Idol-Maestas, et al.

1. This model of consultation requires team ownership of the referred problem.

2. Implementation of the model requires change for educators and administrators.

3. As consultants and mediators learn to apply reinforcement principles and practices to help the target student, these principles are also applied to their interactions with each other.

4. The triadic model involves making data-based decisions.

In general, the triadic model seeks to enhance the competencies of all who influence the problematic student. This spirit of shared responsibility results in new working relationships which will benefit other students in the future.

Any successful consultative process involves positive interaction between two or more professionals for the purpose of identifying and solving problems confronted during the mainstreaming process. Consultation of collaborating teachers should begin by setting the stage. To do this, some considerations should be examined in the following areas:

- The collaborative relationship should be formed through formal assignment of roles and informal establishment of the team member relationship.

- All parties must strive to be active listeners, so as not to be only intent upon completion of individual goals.

- Observation of each situation is imperative to understand the problems that will arise, and the ability to evaluate performance and make changes will rest largely on what is seen.

- Consultant teachers should perceive their role not as the predominant force, but rather the information gatherer.

One of the major determinants of a successful collaborative relationship is the ability of the team members to work together in a give-and-take manner. Since both team members, the consultant and the mediator, will have areas of specific strength and expertise, there is no designated team leader. Principles of situational leadership can be applied at various levels, however, depending on the skill level of the participant and the goal to be achieved.

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) provide a basis for analysis of leadership used in the collaborative consultative process (see Table 1).

Success of the consultant is also dependent upon the ability of the consultant to gain respect and acceptance from others. Acceptance strategies described by Idol-Maestes, et al., include:

Acceptance Strategies

- Treat others with respect
- Share information
- Use appropriate language
- Listen to others
- Model use of interview skills
- Demonstrate willingness to learn from others
- Give and receive feedback
- Give others credit for their ideas and accomplishments
- Use confrontation skills appropriately
- Use situational leadership

Use of appropriate acceptance strategies are frequently the key to success of the collaborative consultation process. Once acceptance, respect and confidence have been gained, the next steps are easier. It is important to proceed carefully through the initial stages of

development of the consultative relationship to insure future successes.

Consultation as described here is a temporary relationship and is based on the assumption that everyone involved is motivated and dedicated to the task at hand. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The special education consultant must recognize this and work diligently to insure team participation at the most productive level. Cooperation of any degree will serve as a basis for other partnerships and will be a model for those who see problematic learners as the responsibility of special educators.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, D., Wyne, M. (1979); Blackburn, J. & Powell, W. Consultation: Strategy for Improving Education. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Dollar, B. and Klinger, R. (1975). I.C. Parker (Ed.) Psychological Consultation: Helping Teachers Meet Special Needs. Reston, Va.: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Evans, S. (1980). The Consultant Role of the Resource Teacher. Exceptional Children, 46, pp. 402-403.

Geiger, W. (1983). National Directory of Special Education Teachers Preparation Programs. Washington, D.C.: National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth.

Heron, T. and Harris, K. (1982). The Educational Consultant: Helping Professionals, Parents and Mainstreamed Students. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.

Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K. (1982). Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Idol-Maestas, L.; Nevin, A; and Paolucci-Whitcomb, P. (1984). Facilitators Manual for Collaborative Consultation: Principles and Techniques. Reston, Va.: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Lilly, S. Ed. (1979). Children With Exceptional Needs. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. pp. 53-55.

Reynolds, M. and Birch, J. Teaching Exceptional Children in All American Schools: A First Course for Teachers and Principals. Reston, Va.: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Tharp, R. and Wetzel, R. (1969). Behavior Modification in National Environments. New York: Academic Press.

Leadership Styles Appropriate for Collaborative Consultation

WHAT LEADERSHIP STYLES CAN BE UTILIZED IN AN INTERACTIVE PROCESS?

LEADERSHIP	LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS		TEACHING AND TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS	CONTRACTING CONSIDERATIONS
STYLES	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE	WHO OWNS THE PROBLEM?	RESPONSIBILITY
1. HIGH TASK LOW RELATIONSHIP (TELLS)	WELL DEFINED METHODS	IMPOSES METHODS IN AN UNPLEASANT MANNER	YOU (YOU DECIDE & ACT)	YOU DEFINE TASK AND REINFORCER
2. HIGH TASK HIGH RELATIONSHIP (SELLS)	SETS GOALS AND PROVIDES SUPPORT	IMPOSES TOO MUCH STRUCTURE, DOESN'T SEEM GENUINE	BOTH (YOU SELL TIME IDEA AND ACTION)	JOINT CONTROL OF TASK OR REINFORCER
3. HIGH RELATIONSHIP LOW TASK (PARTICIPATES)	TRUSTS STAFF FACILITIES GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT	UNWILLING TO RISK RELATIONSHIP FOR TASK ACCOMPLISHMENT	THE OTHER PERSON (YOU SHARE THE IDEAS AND ACTION)	EQUAL CONTROL BOTH TASK & REINFORCER
4. LOW RELATIONSHIP LOW TASK (DELEGATES)	APPROPRIATELY DELEGATES RESPONSIBILITY & SUPPORT	DOESN'T PROVIDE NEEDED DIRECTION OR SUPPORT	NEITHER (SHE/HE DOES HIS/HER OWN THING	OTHER PERSON DEFINES TASK AND REINFORCER

Note: Adapted from P. Hersey & K. Blanchard (1982). Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources. Inglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

TABLE 1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE